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"MY MOTHERLAND" SERIES XE. NO. 21

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PANDIT MADAN - - - - MOHAN MALAVIYA

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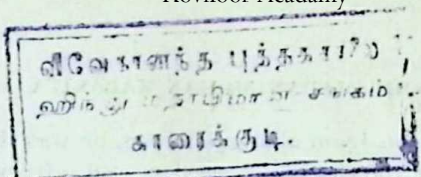

PANDIT MADAN MOHAN MALAVIYA

Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya has been a most orthodox Hindu. Even to-day, he keeps to his religious observances strictly, and often he is considered too exclusive. For instance, he refuses to take his food in the presence of any one. All the same, his orthodoxy did not stand in the way of his going to England for the R. T. C. Where national interests demand, he has always been ready to change his outlook, and to disregard even those religious injunctions which, in his opinion, should ordinarily receive the homage of all Hindus.

Similarly, he is for the active uplift of the Harijans and denounces untouchability. He recognises that in the interests of India and of Hinduism, that curse must go and he has no patience with those who urge that the Shastras endorse the present inhuman practices.

In both these directions, he is an example of what a Hindu should be. Hinduism is no inelastic or fossilised religion. It is comprehensive enough to take note of the times ; and not a few of its great exponents have been bordering on even atheism. Anyway, Pandit Malaviya follows the sane Hindu tradition when he advocates that the change in times must be noted.

The Pandit has been equally broad-minded and faultless in public life. Among the Nationalist leaders alive to-day, his association with the Congress has been longest. Almost from its start, he has been one of it supporters. Very often he has disagreed with its policy, but he has remained loyal throughout. When, for instance, the Congress first decided

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on non-co-operation from the legislature, he was its stoutest opponent both at the Congress session and afterwards; but he declined to contest a seat. And he is so radical a Nationalist that the Hindu Mahasabha, of which he was the chief founder, has practically disowned him. Whatever his differences for the moment from any institution, he rarely makes enemies: and he is one of the few Congressmen who have always been heard with respect by the Government. No one has ever impeached his sincerity or his patriotism; and if to-day he disagrees vehemently with you, to-morrow, when he finds you right, he will back you with equal warmth. Thanks to all these qualities, he has been the foremost peacemaker in India.

Orthodox Family

Panditji comes of a respectable family of Brahmans who originally belonged to Malwa. One of his ancestors migrated to Allahabad nearly four hundred years ago. The family has produced renowned Sanskrit scholars and authors for several generations. Pandit Braj Nath, his father, who passed away at a ripe old age leaving several sons and daughters, was one of the best scholars of his time. He was a reputed preacher whose popular exposition of the Srimat Bhagavata and other *puranas* was much appreciated. Many such princes as the late Maharajas of Durbhanga and of Benares were among those who paid reverence to him and regarded him as almost a *guru* for his learning and piety. He produced several notable devotional works in Sanskrit, some of which have been published by his dutiful son. The family was never in affluent circumstances and it was at no small sacrifice that Pandit Braj Nath educated his several children. And it was his good fortune to live to see the fruits of his self-abnegation in the career of at least one of his sons.

Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya is his father's third son born on Dec. 25, 1861. Born and bred up at Allahabad, Pandit

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Madan Mohan's love of and devotion to his native city, has never known any bounds. And the conservative instinct is so deeply rooted in him that he has never been able to persuade himself to change even his residence for a better and more comfortable locality in the station. 'Live as far as possible from the crowded quarters,' said Sir T. Madhava Rao to him when the veteran statesman saw Pandit Madan Mohan at the first Madras Congress and felt interested in him as a rising public man, being impressed by the sincerity and eloquence of his speech at the Congress. But even successive visitations of plague, which several times necessitated the temporary abandonment of the fine house he has built for himself in the bye-lane where he was born and his castemen live, have not been able to shake his apparent resolve that he shall pass his days in the old familiar corner.

Active As a Student

Pandit Malaviya received his education first in two Sanskrit Patashalas—the Dharma Jnanopadesh Patashala and next, the Vidya Dharma Vardhini Sabha, and was later sent to an English school. He passed his entrance examination from the Allahabad Zilla School and then joined the Muir Central College. As a student he began to take a warm interest in public questions, religion and education being his favourite themes. And to this day the two spheres of national life to which he is most drawn are religion and education. He was among the founders of the Allahabad Literary Institute and of the Hindu Samaj. He took the most active part in the debates which were frequently held in the Institute, and even at this day he grows enthusiastic when his mind travels back to those early years when he was cultivating the remarkable powers of speech and debate which stand him in such good stead at the bar, on the platform and in the Council. Pandit Madan Mohan's career as a student was not a particularly brilliant one. He passed the Entrance Examination

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of the Calcutta University in 1879, and F. A. in 1881 and he graduated in 1884. It was not till seven years later that he became an LL. B., while he discontinued his studies some time after he had joined the M. A. class without waiting to take the degree.

Not being well-to-do enough to remain a student after he became a B.A., Pandit Madan Mohan took up the post of an assistant master in the Government High School at Allahabad towards the end of 1884. He remained in that position till about ths middle of 1887 on a salary of between Rs. 50 and Rs. 75. One noteworthy fact which may be recalled with interest in these days of rigid discipline is that his being a Government servant did not stand in the way of his participation in political movements; he spoke at the Congress itself while a Government official, and his *guru*, Pandit Adityaram, always an independent man, was also a delegate to the Calcutta Congress of 1886.

Journalistic Ventures

Work in connection with the National Congress, brought Pandit Madan Mohan in contact with the late Rajah Rampal Singh of Kalakankar, who was proprietor of the paper called the *Hindustan*, and on the Raja, who had always a kindly feeling for the Pandit, offering him the editorship of the paper, Mr. Malaviya relinquished the teacher's place for that of editor and joined his new post in the middle of 1887, though reluctantly; for, he really regarded the vocation of teacher as a sacred one and he gave it up only because he believes that journalism is only another form of educational work. He remained editor of the *Hindustan* for two years and a half, his salary being Rs. 200. He conducted the paper with such marked ability that an acknowledgment was made of its public usefulness in the Government Administration Report itself. Pandit Madan Mohan's direct connection with journalism did not stop on his

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giving up the editorship of the *Hindustan*. He became editor of the *Indian Union*, an independent organ of Indian opinion with which the honoured name of Pandit Ajodhia Nath was associated. His connection with the *Indian Union* was kept up though not exactly as editor, till its incorporation with the *Advocate* of Lucknow. Pandit Madan Mohan's interest in journalism and faith in the press as a powerful factor in the formation of public opinion and in influencing the course of administration have not abated in the course of years. He started the weekly Hindi paper, the *Abhyudaya*, and laboured hard to make it informing and instructive by himself contributing numerous articles to its columns. The *Abhyudaya* has made excellent progress since it was started and has done a deal of public service, but its proprietor has been out of pocket to a considerable tune on its account. The Pandit's greatest achievement in the field of journalism was the founding of the daily *Leader*.

Joins The Bar

While he was conducting the *Hindustan*, he was pressed by men, for whom he had the highest regard and who took a warm personal interest in the young man's rise, to qualify himself for the bar. Pandit Madan Mohan himself was reluctant to a degree to become a pleader. The bent of his mind was for public work—particularly in the fields of religion and education—and money-making as such had no attraction for him. But he was prevailed upon to overcome his unwillingness and he accordingly joined the Law classes when he was editing the *Hindustan*. He took his LL.B. degree in 1891 and joined the High Court in 1899. Pandit Ajudhia Nath once complained to Mr. Hume that after he had taken to the study of law, Pandit Madan Mohan's interet in Congress work rather slackened. "Quite right", said the old man with fatherly solicitude, "he must concentrate all his attention on law." And turning to Pandit Madan Mohan, Mr. Hume spoke

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somewhat as follows : " Madan Mohan, God has endowed you with plenty of brains. Slave at the profession for ten years and you are bound to get to the top. Then your public usefulness will increase greatly owing to the position you will attain, and you can do much for the country." The piece of advice was never acted upon. The claims of various public works had always the lion's share of his time and attention, and though he has risen creditably high in the profession and is recognised as a skilled and successful advocate, he has never reached the first two or three places at the bar. This is entirely owing to his neglect of opportunities which came to him unsought. " Malaviya had the ball at his feet ", one of the Indian leaders of the bar said once, " but he refused to kick it."

The Ilbert Bill Fight

We have said that even as a student Pandit Madan Mohan began to take an active interest in the public affairs of his country. The Allahabad Literary Institute served as his training ground. He founded the Hindu Samaj with others and was one of its most active members. Politics too was not left alone. An instance may be cited. During the days of the Ilbert Bill agitation, the *Pioneer* remarked that Upper India was very quiet and did not care for the measure. Pandit Madan Mohan felt the reproach to his province, and lost no time in getting up a successful demonstration at Allahabad. An old and respected member of the community grumbled that young men should have taken upon themselves such a task without leaving it to grown-up men. Pandit Madan Mohan retorted that he would be quite content to do so, provided the old men did their duty : but if they left it alone, he as a young man for all the regard he had for the seniors would not hesitate to do what he could. This may be said to be typical of the man. Respect older men certainly, yes, even to an extreme degree at times ; but public duty *must* be done even at the risk of

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being misunderstood, if it comes to that, leaving the older men behind.

In the National Congress

Pandit Malaviya joined the National Congress in 1886 when its second session was held at Calcutta under the presidency of Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji. Suddenly in the course of the proceedings when he heard other men speak, the feeling came to him that he might speak also, and encouraged by Pandit Adityaram, he made his first attempt. The man and the speech alike produced a favourable impression, and Mr. Hume spoke of them in the introduction to the report of that year's Congress thus: "The speech that was most enthusiastically received was one made by Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, a high caste Brahman, whose fair complexion and delicately chiselled, features, instinct with intellectuality, at once impressed every eye, and who, suddenly, jumping up on a chair beside the President, poured forth a manifestly impromptu speech with an energy and eloquence that carried everything before them. The speech was on Legislative Councils reform, and one sentence at least of the speech deserves to live: 'No taxation without representation.' That is the first Commandment in the Englishman's political Bible."

He spoke on the same subject at the Madras Congress of the next year, and the effort was equally successful. It called forth compliments from such men as Raja Sir T. Madhava Rao, and Mr. Eardley Norton, while Mr. Hume wrote as follows in his Introduction to the Report:—"Then rose Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, a very young and enthusiastic labourer in the cause, and from his speech we feel bound to extract largely, partly because though over-fervid in expression towards its close it embodies truths that merit careful consideration....." At once he became a favourite on the Congress platform, and steadily rose in importance not only

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by his power of speech and contribution to debate, but by the earnest and untiring work he did throughout the year to advance the Congress cause. In 1887, some months before the Congress met at Madras, Mr. Hume wrote to say that though he was hopeful of a large muster of delegates from every province, he was doubtful of North-West Provinces (U.P.) and expressed the hope that some one might rouse the people to a sense of their duty. The hint was at once taken up by Pandit Madan Mohan : he could not brook the idea of the representative character of the Congress suffering by the remissness of his native province, and not well circumstanced as he was, he at once went on a tour in the province and worked in town after town amid environment by no means encouraging. And it was a tribute to his capacity for breathing enthusiasm into people that no fewer than 45 delegates went to distant Madras in that year—a num ber not equalled at any succeeding Madras session for three decades. He also, at the same time became, at the instance of Mr. Hume, Secretary of the N.W.P. Association and of the Standing Congress Committee and remained such for many years. Mr. Hume was eager that after Madras, Allahabad should hold the Congress and it was to Pandit Madan Mohan he turned to take up the idea, invite the Congress and hold a successful session. The Congress of 1888 was perhaps the most interesting held under the old regime. Pandit Ajodhia Nath had not joined the Reception Committee at first, though Pandit Bishambar Nath did, but after he came in he contributed very largely to the success of its work as every one remembers with gratitude. The working secretary was Pandit Madan Mohan. Again, when the Congress was invited to hold its eighth session at Allahabad in 1892 the grievous calamity of the death of Pandit Ajodhia Nath discouraged the people and many suggestions were made that the Joint-General Secretary, Mr. W. C. Bannerjee, should be informed that the Congress

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could not be held there; but there were a few stalwarts, foremost among them Pandit Madan Mohan, who would not listen to counsels of despair. And with Pandit Bishambar Nath, the unfailing old leader and sagacious counsellor at their head, the workers in the cause held a successful session. And the Congress recognised his great services by electing him as the President for the Lahore session in 1909 and later on at Delhi in 1918.

In the Legislatures

Pandit Malaviya had become a member of the Allahabad Municipal Board many years ago and was its Vice-Chairman on one or two occasions. He was also an elected Fellow of the Allahabad University and succeeded Pandit Bishambar Nath as a member of the Legislative Council in 1902 when the latter retired owing to increasing age. Ever since he was member of that Council, till he was elected to the Viceroy's Legislature in 1910, where he has proved very valuable. He did not join the Swarajists, in whose tactics he did not have much faith, and so later on formed the Independent party with Lala Lajput Rai and became its leader.

His greatest achievement has been in the sphere of Education and the Hindu University will ever remain the best memorial of his patriotism. Its achievements have already been dealt with in an earlier Pamphlet (No. 16). Pandit Malaviya revealed his many-sided greatness in rearing up that edifice. He has earned the name of "Prince among Beggars" and Princes will readily testify to its truth. His appeals have always proved irresistible.

The Hindu Mahasabha

Almost from his childhood, he had recognised the need to organise the Hindus. His first endeavour in that line was the starting of the Hindu Samaj in Allahabad. In 1884 he organised the Madhaya Hindu Samaj, which regularly met

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every year in the Congress week ; and in due course it developed into the Sanatana Dharma Mahasabha which met in 1906. In its turn, it paved the way to the Hindu Mahasabha, which later claimed to represent the entire Hindu fold. While many Hindus kept out of it because of its orthodox leanings, Pandit Malaviya incurred the displeasure of the orthodox themselves on not a few occasions by demanding an enlightened outlook in tune with Vedic culture.

For several years, he was its recognised leader; but during the past few years, its machinery passed into the hands of communalists like Dr. Moonje; but still such is Panditji's hold on the Hindu masses that he is easily supreme at any of their conferences.

For Swadeshi

The Pandit has been an ardent champion of the Swadeshi movement for the last forty years. So far back as 1881 a Deshi Tyajarat Company was started at Allahabad to promote the use of indigenous manufactures, and Pandit Madan Mohan was one of the prominent supporters. And all these four decades he has consistently advocated the use of Swadeshi things wherever they can be had, even if they are coarser and dearer than foreign manufactures, citing the example of other countries which have preserved or promoted their industries by a similar policy. He has organised several industrial conferences and been a director of some useful Swadeshi manufacturing concerns. For some years past Khadi has been his chief love and he himself uses nothing else.

In 1932, he started the Swadeshi Sangha to co-ordinate Swadeshi activities all over India and it has proved very valuable, not only in enlisting popular support to Swadeshi but in bringing the producer, the dealer and the consumer into mutual contact through exhibitions and other channels.

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Pandit Malaviya was appointed a member of the Industrial Commission in 1916; and when he found that the majority looked at the problems from a standpoint which was not quite Nationalist and recommended a scale of salaries too extravagant for poor India, he wrote a minute of dissent all by himself, in which he also narrated how the great industries of the country had perished and how they can again be revived. He relied for his materials almost entirely on the authority of impartial historians and reports and put forward a vigorous plea for the ampler training of Indians in industrial ventures and the employment of only Indians in the concerned departments, and concluded with the following words from the writings of that great friend of the Indian masses, Sir Fredrick Nicholson:

"I beg to record my strong opinion that in the matter of Indian Industries we are bound to consider Indian interest firstly, secondly and thirdly—I mean by 'firstly' that the local raw products should be utilized, by 'secondly', that industries should be introduced and by 'thirdly' that profits of such industries should remain in the country.

"If measures for the industrial development of India are taken in this spirit, India will become prosperous and strong, and England more prosperous and stronger."

Service of Humanity

Though never in affluence, no call from people in distress ever failed to receive immediate response from him. When plague first broke out in Allahabad, the Collector, Mr. Ferard, a popular officer, asked Pandit Madan Mohan who was a Vice-Chairman of the Municipal Board, to help in taking steps to prevent the disease from spreading. He did so cheerfully. For over a fortnight he personally superintended the disinfection of a dark lane in a *mandi* where it had broken out and where deaths had occurred in almost every house.

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His example was followed by his fellow-Commissioners when the disease spread to other parts of the city. He then initiated the movement for the establishment of a health camp in Sobata Bagh, in which about a hundred families found absolute protection from plague. The Pandit used to attend the camp both morning and evening in the first year. He also used to go to see the plague hospital and encouraged people to go there. In the following year the health camp became so popular that at one time nearly 3,000 persons were living in perfect safety there.

Three Anecdotes

The following anecdotes give a faithful picture of the great humanitarian:

It was in December, 1919, when the Punjab was slowly recovering from the paralysing effects of Martial Law that the writer first met Panditji. One day a woman, bent with age and anxiety, came to the house. It was forenoon; Panditji was sitting down to his breakfast. I announced the arrival of the visitor to him. "Show her in, please," he said in accents of affability. No sooner was she in his presence than she swept out her soul before him. Her son had been shut up in a solitary cell for several months; his only "crime" was that he had attended a public meeting, held in the City, on the memorable 6th of April, 1919. She begged of him to draft an appeal for mercy to the Governor. As Panditji heard her tale of woe, his face changed color and tears trickled down his cheeks. The sorrow-stricken mother saw all this and looking at him exclaimed in tones of adoration: *Shri Krishna Ke Avatar*! Then beckoning to me he asked me to take the mother then and there to Government House. I betrayed my diffidence in doing that job, whereupon he said very affectionately: "Have faith in Him, my boy." I obeyed, for there was no other go.

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Panditji is on his rounds in the Benares Hindu University. His car is held up because a cow has blocked the road. The chaffeur blows his horn violently. Panditji remonstrates with him gently, and then addressing the cow says: "Mother, why art thou so angry?" The cow wags her tail and stands aside!

One day Panditji was showing some visitors over the University, when one of them remarked: "Panditji, you have made a conduit, but where is the free and full flow of the Ganges?"

"Cannot you see it?" rejoined Panditji. "Look (pointing to the steam of students in the distance) there is the *Gnan Ganga* (the Ganges of Knowledge)."

Another visitor's attention was drawn to the ill-matched electric poles, with which the place was dotted, and he complained of it to him as being an eye-sore to an artist. Panditji smiled and said: "They are India's poverty proclamations!"

A Unique Figure

No picture of Pandit Malaviya is complete without a reference to his great services in the Punjab troubles. The incident mentioned above reveals how his work appealed to people in genera. It must also remembered that he embarked on that mission at great risks. No one would have been surprised if, along with Harkishen Lal and others, he had been arrested and sentenced to transportation on summary trial. None of these considerations stood in his way. The moment he heard of the sufferings under the Martial Law regime, he went to the spot and proved a tower of strength to the people. He arranged for the distribution of relief, and put heart into the disheartened and secured widespread publicity for the hardships, thus hastening the reversal of the repressive policy.

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And from that day, he has consistently played that role—to fight for justice whenever he was convinced of unfairness and severity. In that noble task, he had bitter experiences and he has been held up to ridicule and obloquy ; but that has not deterred him in the least.

In age, he is not yet the G. O. M. of India ; but among the early workers of the Congress, no one is revered to the same degree. Wherever he goes, whether in politics, or social reform, he is listened to with respectful attention ; and such is his sterling patriotism and sincerity that in spite of his unique position as a Hindu leader, he has won the confidence of not a few Moslem leaders.

Perhaps therein lies the most beautiful aspect of his life. While in the case of most leaders, age narrows outlook, in Panditji's life, the reverse was the effect. His enthusiasm, his breadth of vision, the intensity of his patriotism and the catholicity of his religious views—all these have developed with his years, a unique phenomenon in human history.

(SECOND EDITION)

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